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and weakness of his treatment. "Marcus Aurelius never stops to ask whether virtue is worth while" (p. 39); "much as the miser, who in the beginning may have sought money for some definite end, comes at last to give himself over to money-getting in complete forgetfulness of the purposes which money serves, so Marcus becomes an uncompromising pursuer of virtue for virtue's sake" (p. 211); "Marcus Aurelius, lacking the belief in a future life, not able to conceive of the soul as distinct from matter, always conscious of the shortness of life, and despising actual mankind . . . , can only look inward for approval" (p. 56f.); the Stoic conceives of the world as "controlled and permeated by impersonal reason acting according to laws, in the scientific sense of orderly sequences" (p. 125); Marcus Aurelius "gathers the fairest illustrations that he knows of what is honorable and pure and lovely and of good report, that he may think on these things" and "there is something almost pathetically effortful in this enumeration" (p. 130f.).

On the other hand, "moral progress in the world, as a whole, is the life and hope of Christianity" (p. 42); Bishop Ignatius exhorts his readers to unity, obedience, submission to authority, particularly to that of the bishop, as he who doeth anything apart from the bishop is not clean in his conscience, "and all this with a view to the higher service of humanity as a whole" (p. 772f.); the Christian believes in "the presence and activity of the personal Governor who punishes and rewards, and wishes to obtain both virtue and the ultimate reward of virtue" (p. 125f.); and the Christian sees in Christ the concrete ideal, "whose approval is the approval of already perfect humanity" (p. 56), the exemplar, "with no uncertain outlines, fixed and unchangeable, without rival or equal," and "is absorbed into his ideal" (p. 132f.).

If this book should lead the author, or some of his readers, to undertake, in a more adequate manner, a comparative study of Stoicism and Christianity, it would not have been written in vain.

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NATHANIEL SCHMIDT.

**SOME DOGMAS OF RELIGION.** By John McTaggart Ellis McTaggart, Doctor in Letters, Fellow and Lecturer of Trinity College in Cambridge. London: Edward Arnold. Pp. 299.

A dogma is defined as "any proposition which has a metaphysical significance." A proposition has metaphysical significance if it is

"an expression of the ultimate nature of reality," whether its acceptance depends on metaphysical considerations or not. "The assertion of God's existence is equally a dogma whether the believer has arrived at it by argument or accepted it by tradition or feels an intuitive and irresistible conviction to believe it." There are other definitions, but the one given, Dr. McTaggart thinks, accords best with the ordinary use of the word. It embraces all propositions called dogmas, even those in the Christian creeds which have reference to historical events; since their claim to be called dogmas, rests upon the fact that they assert that these events (*e. g.* the Crucifixion) exercised a unique influence on the relations between God and man.

Religious dogmas are those whose acceptance or rejection by any person would alter his religious position. Religion itself, the author thinks, may best be described as "an emotion resting on a conviction of a harmony between ourselves and the universe at large." Objection might be taken to the definition of religion as an *emotion* resting on a conviction of a *harmony*, etc., but it is scarcely necessary to discuss it, since the author's arguments do not turn on the words we have emphasized. He is concerned chiefly with the *convictions* on which the emotion depends.

In the first two chapters the Importance of Dogma and the Establishment of Dogma are discussed. Then follow chapters on Human Immortality, Human Pre-existence, Free Will, God as Omnipotent, A Non-omnipotent God, Theism and Happiness. The freshest, most interesting, if not the most convincing parts of Dr. McTaggart's philosophy are the discussions on Human Immortality and Human Preëxistence. These dogmas, Dr. McTaggart thinks, can be proved only on *a priori* grounds. In the present volume various objections to these dogmas are examined—not perhaps the objections which are most serious from the modern scientific standpoint—and some empirical arguments are adduced in their favor. But empirical arguments cannot establish them: they require a system of metaphysics. Such a system he has already published in his "Studies in Hegelian Cosmology." In that work he argues from the principles of Hegel's Philosophy that human selves or persons are eternal. They are fundamental differentiations of the absolute. Moreover, only selves (the term is not confined to human beings) exist. All other things are differentiations of selves. The Absolute, the unity of the whole,

is not itself a person, or in any way conscious. It exists only *for* the selves as conscious beings. The unity of the universe is a unity of finite persons or selves.

We are not satisfied that the non-personal character of the Absolute follows even from Dr. McTaggart's principles. And the author himself does not seem to be fully satisfied with his demonstration. But we cannot enter into that question here. The reader who wishes to pursue the subject further must refer to the excellent discussions in the "Studies" itself. There is one point, however, to which we must refer, because it is raised in "Some Dogmas of Religion" also. The Absolute cannot be a person, it is held, because personality involves an *other*. But the *other* involved need not be other than the person. Subject implies an object, the ego a non-ego, but the person is not to be identified with the subject or ego. A person is a duality of subject and object in unity. And there is nothing impossible in the notion that the Universe is such a duality in unity. Some such notion is involved in the conception of God as an eternal Trinity in Unity—a conception which Dr. McTaggart does not mention in this book as one of the dogmas of religion, although it is put forward expressly by theologians as meeting some of the objections which he raises to the theory of a personal God.

Knowing Dr. McTaggart's views on the personality of the Absolute, we could expect nothing from him but destructive criticism of Theism. And this is what we get, and it will doubtless cause Theists to reflect on their position. The book would have been more useful, however, if the author had addressed himself to his task with a little more sympathy and understanding. Few modern theists, we imagine, would claim the "theistic" views here criticised as their own. Indeed, the reader gets the impression sometimes that the writer is simply indulging in logical trifling, that the discredited theistic doctrine is unworthy of serious consideration and may be caricatured to any extent. What other impression is possible from such paragraphs as the following: "An omnipotent person is one who can do anything." "Now suppose that God had willed to create a universe, and had not willed that the law of Identity should be valid. It seems that we have no alternative but to be inconsistent or to be completely unmeaning. To suppose that the universe would not have been created, although God had willed that it should, would be

inconsistent with his omnipotence. But the assertion that the universe could be created without being a universe, and without being created is surely unmeaning. And yet how can the universe be the universe, or creation be creation unless the law of Identity be true." "Again is there any meaning in the supposition that God could create a man who was not a man, or that he could create a being who was neither man nor not man? But, if he could not then he is bound by the law of Contradiction and the Law of Excluded Middle, and, once more, he is not omnipotent." (Pp. 202, 203.)

When theologians talk of omnipotence with reference to God there is a "universe of discourse" implied. Further, omnipotence is an attribute of a Personal Being, in organic relation with other attributes: and when God is said to possess it, the meaning surely is, that there is nothing which can prevent Him realizing any purpose which His wisdom and goodness, *e. g.*, decide Him to attempt. But Dr. McTaggart takes omnipotence in an absolutely abstract sense. It is the omnipotence of nobody, and our author amuses himself by conceiving this nobody turn somersaults in nothing.

This arbitrary abstract method of criticism seems to us to vitiate a good deal of the book. It is undeniably clever, and very many good things are said; and it fully sustains Dr. McTaggart's reputation as a clear thinker and a lucid writer; but much of it is likely to produce irritation rather than reflection. Popular conceptions of Theism are examined and, chiefly, antiquated methods of establishing them. Of course, an author has a perfect right to choose what he will discuss, but he has no right to assert finality of his conclusions until he has covered the whole ground. We should have thought that Professor Royce's "The World and the Individual," *e. g.*, would be examined before the paragraphs on p. 260 were written with its assumption that the only reasonable alternatives are, "A non-omnipotent God—a person who fights for the good and who may be victorious," and "an omnipotent person to whom good and evil are equally pleasing." The paragraph referred to is the following: "That is all that the doctrine of a non-omnipotent God can give us—a person who fights for the good and who may be victorious. But it is at any rate better than the doctrine of an omnipotent person to whom good and evil are equally pleasing. And it is fortunate that, as we have seen, the more attractive of the two ideas is also the

more probable. Indeed, when the non-omnipotent God is also taken as non-creative, there seems to me, as I have said, only one reason why we should not believe in his existence—namely, that there is no reason why we should believe in it.”

But our dissatisfaction with Dr. McTaggart's philosophical method is deeper than this: The adequacy of its fundamental conceptions may be called into question. His definition of religion as “an emotion resting on a conviction of a harmony between ourselves and the universe at large” offers a point of departure. This definition is interesting and led us to expect that our author intended to consider dogmas in relation to our emotions. We expected him to show us what dogmas are necessary in order that we might have the most comprehensive, rich and harmonious emotional life. But we were disappointed. Religion, although “almost the best of all earthly things” (p. 298), has no claim to reality. “The more complete religion is not necessarily the more true, for it may assert a harmony which does not exist” (p. 11). The only kind of harmony that we can assert to exist is a harmony which is deduced from certain abstract conceptions. That a dogma or set of dogmas fails to satisfy our emotional nature, or even our ethical demands, is nothing. The universe may be intolerably bad—intolerably miserable or intolerably wicked—but it cannot be illogical. It is assumed *without proof* that the universe respects some of the claims of our nature. An examination of the phenomenal world does not verify the assumption that the universe is completely rational, still we cling to our faith and pursue our investigations. The existence of ignorance, error, unsolved contradictions are not allowed to throw doubt on the proposition that “the real is rational;” but a toothache or an ungenerous thought is enough to break the backbone of a direct faith in the goodness and wisdom of things. It is utterly unreasonable to assume, in the face of appearances, that the nature of the universe is such that a wise and good man may find himself in harmony with, or that a man who is not good and wise may become so could he discover its secret. Reason must first show that goodness and happiness are involved in the conception of a universe. It is clear, Dr. McTaggart argues, that the universe does not respect all our ideas, what right have we to assume that it respects them at all until we can prove it? But the universe does not respect all our intellectual claims, yet he assumes that it is constituted in accordance with logical principles.

If a class of men (among whom is Lotze) say that they have a conviction which profoundly influences their whole lives that "what is greatest, most beautiful, most worthy, is not a mere thought," it is scarcely philosophical to dismiss their statement as our author does, with the remark that it is merely of autobiographical interest and "revelant as a contribution to statistics." Their conviction may not be a sufficient reason for others to believe the same dogma, but it certainly ought to be sufficient to make a philosopher inquire what is involved in it, and what it points to. These convictions are often the most essential facts in a man's autobiography and must be known if his life and teaching are to be properly understood. And the philosopher is more profitably employed in analyzing the lives men actually lead and in rendering them intelligible in relation to the universe than in laying down the methods by which men should live, thus reconstructing them from the foundation. Such analysis is likely to modify the convictions and might, possibly, lead them beyond themselves into something more profound.

This, however, is not Dr. McTaggart's view. No man, he says, "is entitled to believe a dogma except in so far as he has investigated it for himself. And since the investigation of a dogma is a metaphysical process, and religion must be based on dogma, it follows, further, that no man is justified in a religious attitude except as a result of metaphysical study. The result is sufficiently serious. For most people, as the world stands at present, have not the disposition, the education, and the leisure necessary for the study of metaphysics. And thus we are driven to the conclusion, that whether religion is true or not, most people have no right to accept any religion as true." "The result may be evil, but that is unfortunately no ground for denying its truth." (Pp. 292, 293.)

Many, however, will, on this ground only, deny its truth and refuse to admit the claims of the metaphysician. The prophet will still proclaim his message and people will hear him gladly. The mystic and the poet will seek other sources of inspiration; and even the practical man who has no time, even if he had the ability, to investigate his creed, will lay hold on something by which he can live and realize the meaning and worth of his life. The fundamental article in Dr. McTaggart's creed—metaphysics is the only religious authority—has not been demonstrated. Consequently it is not irrelevant to quote an opinion by another meta-

physician:<sup>1</sup> "Metaphysics is the finding of bad reasons for what we believe upon instinct."

"In the fitness of time it may be possible to hold beliefs with intelligence as well as conviction."<sup>2</sup> That time is not yet. Meanwhile the serious theist is conscious that the reasons he offers for his convictions are unsatisfactory. If he reads "Some Dogmas of Religion" he may be compelled to review his reasons, or to seek better ones. And since "the finding of those reasons is no less an instinct" than the disposition to believe, he will doubtless be grateful to so eminent a critic as Dr. McTaggart for all the help he is able to give him.

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PROBLEMS AND PERSONS. By Wilfred Ward. London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1903. Pp. liv, 378.

Mr. Ward's book is a blending of philosophy and biography, and is well represented by its title. If the atmosphere of the book—to use a phrase of which the author is somewhat fond—is tinged with his definite religious and political convictions, it is refreshing to escape for a moment from the dull gray light of "pure reason," into something more human. It is useful for the student of ethics to be reminded of the great traditions and forces which have done so much to mold the spacious present. For Mr. Ward has something new and intimate to say about several men who did much to determine the course of the nineteenth century; men who embodied its aspirations, beliefs, its scientific advance and historical sense: Tennyson, Newman, Huxley, Renan. Even now they belong to the past.

Mr. Ward finds a parallel between the theory of evolution and the development of dogmatic theology, and so unites the attitude of faith with the acceptance of natural truth as revealed by scientific method. For knowledge itself in all its branches is a case of "organic growth." And so the varied utterances of "the time-spirit of the nineteenth century" are harmonized. Like the instruments of an orchestra which taken severally are harsh or strident, yet blend sweetly in a symphony, so the storm and stress about which the nineteenth century talked so much,

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<sup>1</sup> Bradley, "Appearance and Reality," preface.

<sup>2</sup> Carveth Read, "Metaphysics of Nature."